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SERVICE DATE - JANUARY 2, 2004

DO

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-400 (Sub-No. 3X)]

Seminole Gulf Railway, L.P.—Abandonment Exemption—in Sarasota County, FL

On December 15, 2003, Seminole Gulf Railway, L.P. (SGLR), filed with the Surface Transportation Board a petition under 49 U.S.C. 10502 for exemption from the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 10903 to abandon an approximately 12.43-mile portion of its Venice Branch between milepost SW 892 outside the city limits of the City of Sarasota, and milepost 904.4 near the City of Venice, in Sarasota County, FL. The line includes a “wye” and stub at approximately milepost SW 904.2 and side tracks. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Codes 34233, 34238, 34272, 34275, and 34285, and includes the stations of Laurel (milepost SW 900), Nakomis (milepost SW 902), and Venice (milepost SW 904).

The line does not contain federally granted rights-of-way. Any documentation in SGLR’s possession will be made available promptly to those requesting it.

The interest of railroad employees will be protected by the conditions set forth in Oregon Short Line R. Co.—Abandonment—Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979).

By issuance of this notice, the Board is instituting an exemption proceeding pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502(b). A final decision will be issued by April 2, 2004.

Any offer of financial assistance (OFA) under 49 CFR 1152.27(b)(2) will be due no later than 10 days after service of a decision granting the petition for exemption. Each OFA must be accompanied by a \$1,100 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25).

All interested persons should be aware that, following abandonment of rail service and salvage of the line, the line may be suitable for other public use, including interim trail use. Any request for a public use condition under 49 CFR 1152.28 or for trail use/rail banking under 49 CFR 1152.29 will be due no later than January 22, 2004. Each trail use request must be accompanied by a \$150 filing fee. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(27).

All filings in response to this notice must refer to STB Docket No. AB-400 (Sub-No. 3X) and must be sent to: (1) Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001; and (2) Eric M. Hocky, Gollatz, Griffin & Ewing, P.C., Four Penn Center, Suite 200, 1600 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19103. Replies to the petition are due on or before January 22, 2004.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment and discontinuance procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152. Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) at (202) 565-1539. [Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by SEA will be served upon all parties of record and upon any

agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Other interested persons may contact SEA to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS). EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be made available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Board decisions and notices are available on our website at
“WWW.STB.DOT.GOV.”

Decided: December 22, 2003.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik, Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary